Implementation of community-based crisis model

In the fall of 2011, Health Sciences North, the Greater Sudbury Police Services and the Canadian Mental Health Association put forward a proposal to the North East Local Health Integration Network, to enhance and expand the delivery model of the community’s existing Crisis Intervention service. This proposal was deemed an improvement to the existing model which had been hospital-based and located adjacent to the Emergency department since the late 1980’s.

The proposal laid out important improvements being considered:

• offering care outside of the local Emergency Department and in an environment that could more sensitively address needs of clients with mental health concerns,
• reducing police waiting times for Crisis and Emergency Department services, and
• enhancing the capacity and profile of the Crisis mobile team to respond consistently to calls in the community for both youth and adults.

In February 2012, at the invitation of the North East Local Health Integration Network, a Community Crisis Steering Committee was formed to begin planning for changes that the NE LHIN supported.

Partners in the planning included representatives from the Crisis Intervention team and Emergency Department staff from Health Sciences North, a community advocate and a family member of a service user, the Greater Sudbury Police Services, Canadian Mental Health Association’s Sudbury-Manitoulin branch, the Child & Family Centre and NISA’s Regional Warm Line. The Steering Committee recommended changes to the hours the Crisis service would operate, the location of the service and how HSN’s Crisis Intervention staff would work more collaboratively with police and other front-line agencies providing crisis and pre-crisis care.

Planning continued through the spring and summer of 2012. Extensive community consultation was conducted, including focus groups with service users and family members from Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre, Sudbury Action Centre for Youth, the local chapter of the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario, the Rainbow District School Board, and mental health clients on Health Science North’s adult units.
On October 1st, 2012, the new community-based crisis model was launched. The new model featured the following:

- A new downtown location at 127 Cedar St, in the Sudbury Mental Health & Addictions Centre operated by Health Sciences North
- Extended hours at 127 Cedar St, which is now open to adults and youth seeking crisis support until 10pm, 7 days per week
- Expanded hours for the Mobile Crisis team, who now respond to crisis calls in the community until 10pm, 7 days per week
- A comprehensive training program for responding to clients with mental health concerns delivered to the Greater Sudbury Police Services, by staff from CMHA and HSN
- The introduction of a Crisis Support Navigator in the Emergency room at Health Sciences North
- An urgent care clinic for existing mental health clients of LHIN-funded agencies, as an alternative to seeking care in the ED (Emergency Department)
The launch of the changes to the service was accompanied by significant communications and marketing efforts through distribution of posters to over 1000 locations in the community, and direct-to-consumer advertising through billboards spaced strategically in the community.
Successes to date

Emergency Department Impact

There has been an 18% reduction in presentations to HSN’s Emergency Room for clients with Mental Health concerns in the past year, since the new model was implemented. Visits have decreased from 541 visits in the quarter before the changes to 410 visits one year later.

Since moving the Crisis Intervention team to the Sudbury Mental Health & Addictions Centre on Cedar St, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of individuals seeking crisis care. Overall, there has been a 62% increase in the volume of visits to the Crisis Intervention service.

Mobile Crisis Growth

There has been a 39% increase in mobile visits in the community by the Crisis Intervention team. The team is available 7 days per week to provide support directly in the community, including private residences, schools, or wherever the client and family wish to meet.

Increase in community-based Crisis care

Since moving the Crisis Intervention team to the Sudbury Mental Health & Addictions Centre on Cedar St, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of individuals seeking crisis care. Overall, there has been a 62% increase in the volume of visits to the Crisis Intervention service.
Impact on Police Services

In the fall of 2012, extensive training was provided by CMHA and HSN staff to 296 members of the Greater Sudbury Police Service, including communications centre (911) personnel. The training included content and simulations for effective response to people with serious mental illness. It also highlighted changes to the Crisis service, promoting diversion of individuals to the Crisis Centre on Cedar St, or by calling out the mobile team to attend on scene. The number of Mental Health Act apprehensions has decreased substantially in the past year, by 21%. GSPS officers frequently seek the assistance of the Crisis Intervention mobile team, where a trip to the local emergency room can be diverted or suggest a visit to the offices on Cedar St. The average wait time for police at the Emergency room is 2.7 hours (which at 2 officers per Mental Health Act apprehension, equates to 5.4 hours of police being unavailable to respond to emergency calls elsewhere in the community). The average wait time for the mobile crisis team to respond to police calls is less than 30 minutes. That’s a whole lot of time police are able to be freed up to focus on other community safety priorities!

Providing alternatives to the ED for urgent care

In January 2013, as part of the enhancements, Health Science North’s Community Mental Health team also opened a clinic that is accessible to existing service users who lack access to primary care services, in an effort to reduce the dependence on the Emergency Room for non-emergent care. HSN’s Sudbury Mental Health & Addictions Centre at 127 Cedar St now operates an urgent care clinic two afternoons per week. Since January 2013, nearly 160 clients have taken advantage of this service and visited the service more than 230 times.
Crisis Support Navigator Impact

The Canadian Mental Health Association’s Crisis Support Navigator has been situated at HSN’s Emergency Room since the spring of 2013. The role supports clients who attend the ED and who may be waiting to see a physician, and also offers the option of diversion to the Crisis team at Cedar St, or a visit at home by the mobile team. Since the spring, the Crisis Navigator has supported nearly 150 individuals and diverted over 40 people to be seen elsewhere in the community.

Overall, the Crisis Intervention model seems to be meeting the community’s needs, since it was revised a year ago. The service has seen tremendous growth in both its community-based and mobile services. In particular there has been significant uptake of the new model by children and youth with an increase in visits from 382 accessing services in the year prior to the Crisis service changes to 1040 youth accessing services this past year. That’s a 172% increase in youth seeking crisis services in our community!

The Crisis Intervention team is moving into new frontiers this fall; offering Crisis assessments over the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) to clients presenting to hospitals outside of Sudbury. The team is currently involved in a pilot program with Espanola Hospital and hopes to expand this service to Manitoulin Island in the near future.
Comments made by clients on CSQ-8 surveys regarding services received through Crisis Intervention:

“I have already recommended your services to others. It’s very useful to have someone to yell at, then talk you down from stupidity. Sometimes ones individual crisis circle can’t always cope, but your staff is kind, understanding and compassionate. That usually works to calm me down. Keep up the awesome work!!! You are needed, and appreciated!!!! THANK YOU!”

“I’m going to miss the amazing councillors here! And I love how they don’t watch the clock. They actually help and show as much understanding as possible. And are open minded, friendly and honest. Great people here with a heart of gold. An office of angels. Have an amazing day and thank you for all your understanding and help.”

“Meeting with the social worker today helped me to see my personal crisis situation in a different light. I feel that I can more confidently address the issue and its consequences.”

“I was treated! Finally like I should have been years ago. You have given me much hope now to move forward. You actually care about people and yes your help will never be forgotten.”

“Was a really great service available here. Made me feel welcome and that MY needs and desires were what mattered. No one else’s. Even advocates for me. Thank you so much.”

“I am forever grateful that Crisis helped avert a situation in my family that could have gone awry very easily. I was provided with immediate attention for my daughter and our family. It started with one worker and branched into three different social service agencies within the span of 72 hours. That, to me, is extraordinary service.”

“There are times when I have called Crisis and their response has been slow and that was really difficult to deal with. However, last time I called the response time was good and the staff demonstrated empathy and knowledge of community resources so I would like to tell that staff to keep up the good work and that the evident care and concern was appreciated.”
The Crisis Support Navigator is a new position with the Canadian Mental Health Association - Sudbury/Manitoulin (CMHA) that works from Health Science North (HSN) Emergency Department site from Monday to Friday 12 noon – 8pm (identified peak hours). The Crisis Support Navigator position was implemented in February 2013 when the program was launched.

CMHA and HSN are committed to ensure that individuals continue to receive services that are person-focused and optimize the resources of HSN, CMHA and other community partners to deliver the best possible outcomes.

The Crisis Support Navigator works closely with staff from both the Emergency Department and Crisis Intervention Services. The role of the Crisis Support Navigator is to provide support and help navigate anyone through the mental health care system while they are in crisis at the Emergency Department. Support is provided on a first come first served basis. Navigating the mental health care system includes providing information on services available. The navigator provides screening, assessing, engaging while supporting individuals who are in need of Crisis Services. If there are no safety or medical issues, individuals may benefit from services in the community. Ultimately this provides options for people. The Emergency Department is often a busy place and can be very daunting for anyone who is unfamiliar with that department or not feeling at their best. The Crisis Support Navigator provides support at the Emergency Department which includes outlining the process of care, answering any questions, and sitting with anyone for an extended period of time in the waiting room if needed.

The Crisis Support Navigator position provides improvements to continuity of care and communication, by providing more appropriate referrals, increased public knowledge, and people who attend the Emergency Department feel supported and heard. The Crisis Support Navigator role is one piece of the mental health care system in Sudbury, working effectively with others.
705.523.4988
hsnsudbury.ca
705.675.4760
24-hour Crisis hotline